

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY CAIRO

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AMEMBASSY JIDDA

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SUBJECT: PRESIDENT ASAD'S MESSAGES TO ARAB HEADS OF STATE

1. SYRIAN PRESS FEBRUARY 20 CONTAINED FIRST SIGNIFICANT DOMESTIC REFERENCES TO MESSAGES WHICH PRESIDENT ASAD HAS SENT IN PAST FEW DAYS, VIA HIS FOREIGN MINISTER OR SYRIAN EMBASSIES IN ARAB CAPITALS, TO ALL ARAB HEADS OF STATE. WRITING IN GOVERNMENT DAILY AL-THAWRA, COLUMNIST YA'RUB SAYYID SET ASAD INITIATIVES IN FRAMEWORK OF SOON-TO-EXPIRE UNDOF MANDATE AND ATTEMPTS TO UNDERMINE ARAB SOLIDARITY BY PROPOSALS FOR PARTIAL OR SEPARATE SETTLEMENTS. SYRIA'S CLEAR POLICY, HE SAID, REJECTS COMPROMISE OR PARTIAL SETTLEMENT. IT REJECTS SPLITTING ARAB RANKS AND WEAKENING ARAB MILITARY AND POLITICAL UNITY WHICH IS ONLY GUARANTEED PATH TO A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT.

2. FOLLOWING THIS POLICY, SAYYID CONTINUED, ASAD'S MESSAGES EMPHASIZED FOLLOWING POINTS:

A. IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING ARAB SOLIDARITY AND COMMITMENT TO RABAT SUMMIT DECISIONS BOTH IN LETTER AND IN SPIRIT.

B. REJECTION OF ANY DIVISION OF THE ARAB CAUSE AND ANY ATEMPT TO WEAKEN FORCE OF ITS CONFRONTATION WITH THE ENEMY IN BOTH MILITARY AND POLITICAL SPHERES.

C. NECESSITY FOR FURTHER ARAB COORDINATION AND AGREEMENT ON PLAN OF ACTION PRIOR TO CONVENING OF GENEVA CONFERENCE.

D. NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN AREA REQUIRE ADDITIONAL ARAB SOLIDARITY AND JOINT ACTION TO PRESERVE GAINS OF OCTOBER 73 AND BATTLE OF GOLAN.

E. ARAB GOVERNMENTS MUST CONFRONT SITUATION WITH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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COURAGE AND REJECT ANY ATTMPT TO SPLIT THEIR CAUSE OR SWAY THEM FROM DECISIONS OF RABAT SUMMIT.

3. BOTH DAMASCUS DAILIES FEB 20 GAVE PROMINENT PLAY TO ARTICLE IN BEIRUT WEEKLY AL-MASA' ON CURRENT SYRIAN POSITION. AMERICANS, ARTICLE ASSERTED, TERMED SYRIAN POSITION AS "HARD-LINE" BUT, IT WAS IN FACT ONLY WAY TO AVOID TACTICAL MISTAKES. SYRIA HAS

REFUSED TO ALLOW ISRAEL TO BENEFIT FROM AGGRESSION AND HAS REFUSED TO GIVE UP ARAB LAND OR COMPROMISE ON RIGHTS OF PALESTINIAN PEOPLE. TOUCHSTONES OF ITS POLICY ARE ARAB UNITY IN FACE OF ATTEMPTS TO DIVIDE SYRIA AND EGYPT, MILITARY PREPAREDNESS, KEEPING DOORS OPEN FOR PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT AND PRESERVING FIRM RELATIONS WITH SOVIET UNION.

4. BOTH DAILIES ALSO CARRIED STATEMENT BY SYRIAN SPONSORED FEDAYEEN GROUP SAIQAH REPEATING ESSENTIALLY ALL POINTS OF ASAD'S MESSAGES. STATEMENT ALSO SAID THAT SAIQAH CENTRAL COUNCIL, IN ITS MEETINGS FEB 18 AND 19, HAD VOWED TO CONTINUE STRUGGLE FOR RECOVERY OF ARAB OCCUPIED LAND AND FULL RIGHTS OF PALESTINIAN PEOPLE, PARTICULARLY RIGHT OF RETURN AND OF SELF-DETERMINATION ON ALL OF THEIR NATIONAL SOIL. COUNCIL STRESSED IMPORTANCE OF PALESTINIAN NATIONAL UNITY WITHIN FRAMEWORK OF PLO AND RIGHT OF PALESTINIAN PEOPLE TO ESTABLISH INDEPENDENT NATIONAL AUTHORITY ON ANY LIBERATED PART OF PALESTINIAN SOIL IN ACCORDANCE WITH RESOLUTIONS OF PALESTINE NATIONAL COUNCIL.

5. COMMENT: WHILE THAWRA'S COLUMNISTS ARE LESS

RELIABLE INDICATORS OF SARG POLICY THAN ITS EDITORIALS, WE ASSUME SAYYID'S ARTICLE ACCURATELY REFLECTS CONTENTS OF ASAD'S MESSAGES TO HIS ARAB COUNTERPARTS. AL-MASA' ARTICLE AND SAIQAH STATEMENT ALSO APPEAR FULLY IN LINE WITH CURRENT SYRIAN THINKING ON MIDDLE EAST DEVELOPMENTS.
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